



## TRT2312HS: The Spirit of Urbanism: Faith and Urban Life

Trinity College, Toronto School of Theology

Winter 2019

### Course Information

*Instructor:* Rev. Jason McKinney, PhD

*E-mail:* [jasonmckinney@gmail.com](mailto:jasonmckinney@gmail.com)

*Office Hours:* by appointment

*Location:* 201 Cowan Ave., Toronto (South entrance)

*Class Times:* Thursdays 7:00-9:00 PM (Jan 10 & 17; Feb 7 & 28; March 7 & 28)

### Course Description

This course will equip students to reflect critically and theologically upon various aspects of urban existence, to discern the implicit theological dimensions of urban life, to participate meaningfully in contemporary discourses about the city, and to cultivate a distinctively urban spirituality.

Urbanism, simply put, consists in a desire to transform the city we have into the city we love -- the city of "our heart's desire." It is, therefore, less about defining "the meaning of the city" (J. Ellul) and more about identifying and encouraging a certain quality of urban life. It is this qualitative aspect of urbanist theory and practice that lends itself to theological reflection and provides an opportunity to better understand the complexities of faithful life and ministry in the contemporary city.

### Course Texts

*All readings* will be made available in pdf format. Students *may choose* to purchase some of the texts listed below.

Borden, Iain, Tim Hall, and Malcolm Miles, eds. 2003. *The City Cultures Reader*. 2 edition. London: Routledge.

Certeau, Michel de. 2011. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven F. Rendall. Third edition. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.

Hardy, Lee. 2017. *The Embrace of Buildings: A Second Look at Walkable City Neighborhoods*. Grand Rapids, MI: Calvin College Press.

- Lefebvre, Henri. 1996. *Writings on Cities*. Edited by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas. 1 edition. Cambridge, Mass, USA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- LeGates, Richard T., and Frederic Stout, eds. 2015. *The City Reader*. 6 edition. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Leong, David P., 2017. *Race and Place: How Urban Geography Shapes the Journey to Reconciliation*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Books.
- Sheldrake, Philip. 2014. *The Spiritual City: Theology, Spirituality, and the Urban*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

### Course Website(s)

- Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701> . Students who have trouble accessing Quercus should ask Sydney Yeung ([sydney.yeung@trinity.utoronto.ca](mailto:sydney.yeung@trinity.utoronto.ca)) for further help.

### Requirements

*The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in six areas:*

- (1) Participation (10%)** - In addition to participating in the regular activity of the class, including the reading of the required texts, students are expected to engage in classroom discussions.
- (2) Reading Reports (20%)** - Students are required to submit a 1-2 page reflection on the assigned readings. Reflections should be uploaded to the course website prior to the class when the readings will be discussed or by midnight on days when the class does not meet. Reports should include a brief summary of the argument as well as 2-3 questions or insights that the reading elicited for you.
- (3) Book Review (20%)** - A review of David Leong's book, *Race and Place*. A 3 to 5 page paper which outlines the main argument of the book, critically engages with at least 2 of Leong's arguments, and attempts to make connections with your own urban experience.

**(4) Walking Journal (20%)** - Students will keep a journal consisting of at least four (4) entries of two (2) pages each. Each entry should be dated with a geographical area identified (e.g. along Queen St W., from Lansdowne to Shaw) and should consist of a reflection on the experience of walking the city. As you walk, pay attention to the sites, sounds, smells, and other feelings that it evokes in you.

According to Michel de Certeau, walking the city actualizes the possibilities of spaces and places and transforms spatial signifiers (streets, parks, etc.) into something else. This assignment involves taking a series of four (4) long and leisurely walks through a city neighbourhood. You are asked to keep a written/pictorial log of your walk, with an eye to those daily human practices, spaces, and places, that might remain invisible from the top of the CN Tower or with *Google Earth*. The entries can be more impressionistic than critical, but should make connections to course themes where relevant. One (1) of the five walks should be taken solely for the purpose of the journal entry (i.e. a walk without a destination).

**(5) A Toast (5%)** - Compose and deliver a toast or a blessing at our concluding meal together. Be creative in the composition and incorporate some of the insights that you've gleaned from the class as it concerns spirituality and the city. The written text should be no more than 1 page.

**(6) Take home exam (25%)** - Three to four essay questions based on course readings and discussion. The exam will be distributed on March 28 and will be due on April 4. Books and notes are permitted.

## Course Schedule

Date	Theme	Readings	Assignment
January 10 [In class]	Introductory Class	N/A	N/A
January 17 [In class]	The city and the theological imagination	(1) Stringfellow, William. "The Church in the City." (2) Gorringer, "The Meaning of the City"	Reading Report on <u>Stringfellow</u>

January 24	The city in the urban disciplines	(1) L. Mumford, "What is a City?" (2) Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life" (3) Castells, "Spaces of Flows..."	Reading Reports - choose two (2) of the readings.
January 31	The good city	(1) Amin, "The Good City" (2) Sheldrake, chaps 6 & 7	Reading Report on <u>Amin</u>
February 7 [In class]	The spiritual city	(1) Sheldrake, chaps 8, 9 & Epilogue (2) Merton, "The Street is for Celebration"	Reading Report on <u>Merton</u>
February 14	Race & Place	(1) W.J. Jennings "Whiteness isn't Progress" (2) Leong, <i>Race &amp; Place</i> 13-81	Reading Report on <u>Jennings</u> .
February 21	Reading Week		
February 28 [In class]	Gentrification & Displacement	(1) Slater, "Gentrification in Canadian Cities" (2) Coulthard, "Dispossession and Indigenous Sovereignty in the City"	Leong Book Review
March 7 [In class]	Unsettling & Placemaking	(1) <a href="#">Ogimaa Mikana Project</a> (2) Blight & King, " <a href="#">Naming is a good start</a> "	Reading Reports on <u>Coulthard</u> , <u>Blight &amp; King</u>
March 14	Walking	(1) de Certeau, "General Introduction" & "Walking the City" (2) Sheldrake, chap. 5	Reading Report on <u>de Certeau</u>
March 21	Commoning	(1) Gibson-Graham, "Commoning as Post-capitalist Politics" (2) Blencowe, "The Matter of the Spirituality of the Commons"	Reading Report on <u>Gibson-Graham</u>
March 28 [In class]	Concluding Meal/Class		A Toast

## **Policies**

**Late work (BD).** Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. This penalty is not applied to students with medical or compassionate difficulties; students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course. Students who for exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness) are unable to complete work by this date may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An SDF must be requested from the registrar’s office in the student’s college of registration no later than the last day of classes in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

**Accessibility.** Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto’s Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

**Plagiarism.** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871>). A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document “Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing” published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges [http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library\\_Archives/Theological\\_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm](http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm).

**Other academic offences.** TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.

**Back-up copies.** Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

**Obligation to check email.** At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at [www.utorid.utoronto.ca](http://www.utorid.utoronto.ca). The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. *Students should check utoronto email regularly* for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

**Email communication with the course instructor.** The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs should be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.